



AANP Member Spotlight: Dawn Bantel, NMD



1. What started your pathway in naturopathic medicine?

I had completed my undergraduate degree in psychology and wanted to continue my education. Knowing that I wanted to pursue a healing profession, I worked as a tech at the university hospital for exposure to different medical careers. Nothing seemed to be a good fit. A friend of mine mailed me brochures for naturopathic schools, this was in 1996 before the schools had websites. I had started to read books about herbal medicine but had no idea that this was an option! I couldn't believe that such a profession existed and knew immediately that I wanted to do this.

2. What do you like most about being a naturopathic doctor and what are some of your challenges?

I love that we have a large array of therapies that work amazingly well. It's been so satisfying to see the progress from being on the fringe of medicine 20 years ago to the widespread acceptance and recognition of our medicine today. It's exciting to see the research catch up and support what we do.

Like many people, I've been going through a career transformation. I had been employed at rehab centers doing administration and medical care for most of my career. In mid-2020, my job ended so I decided to start a private practice. The challenge for me has been figuring out how to create and market a business at this time. It's *really* pushed me out of my comfort zone. I had been a social media dropout with minimal tech skills. I now have a large Tik Tok following! It can be intimidating at times, but I'm blown away at the scale and access we have to people like never before. People really want to learn more about what we do.

3. What makes your membership with AANP valuable as a naturopathic doctor?

I've had a good career because I live in Arizona where we have a broad scope of licensure. I would love this for the whole country. This would benefit naturopathic physicians and their patients. The AANP continues to help make this possible.

Now that I've been on social media, I have realized that there are many other types of providers that have adopted naturopathic medicine. I don't have an issue with this, however, I think it's important that we continue to be united and that we are recognized as the profession that is leading the way. Of course, having a national organization like the AANP is a critical component of this.

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